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O 282330Z DEC 07
FM SECSTATE WASHDC
TO GULF COOPERATION COUNCIL COLLECTIVE IMMEDIATE

UNCLAS STATE 170928

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FOLLOWING STATE 170928 DATED 28 DEC 07 SENT ACTION TO ATHENS
BEIJING BERLIN BRATISLAVE BRUSSELS BUDAPEST CANBERRA COPENHAGEN
DUBLIN HELSINKI LISBON LONDON LUXEMBOURG MADRID MOSCOW NEW DELHI
OSLO OTAWA PARIS PRAGUE ROME STOCKHOLM THE HAGUE TOKYO VIENNA
WARSAW WELLINGTON USEU BRUSSELS COLOMBO DHAKA ISLAMABAD KABUL
KATHMANDU BEING REPEATED FOR YOUR ACTION

QUOTE

UNCLAS STATE 170928

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E.O. 12958: N/A

TAGS: PGOV PINR PINS PREL PTER SHUM PK
SUBJECT: BHUTTO ASSASSINATION AND US POLICY FOR PAKISTAN'S ELECTIONS

¶1. The tragic December 27 assassination of Benazir Bhutto has reinforced urgent goals vis-a-vis Pakistan , U.S. believes that Pakistan must continue on a path leading to a civilian-led democratic government. We continue to support Pakistan,s moderate majority in its struggle against a violent extremist minority. We continue to believe that elections should be held as soon as possible, ideally on January 8. If a delay is necessary, we believe a new date should be announced and that it should be as soon as feasible.

¶2. Department requests that action addressee posts communicate U.S. policy to host governments at appropriate level as soon as possible.

¶3. Talking points:

-Despite the tragic and brutal assassination of Benazir Bhutto on December 27, the United States believes it critical that Pakistan continue along the path to democratically-elected, civilian-led government.

-We consider it vital that the international community maintain a united front in urging Pakistan,s leadership to continue the journey toward democracy with all reasonable speed.

-We are hopeful that elections would go forward as scheduled on January 8 but should a delay be necessary, we believe a new date should be announced and that it should be as soon as elections can be held safely and smoothly.

-Regardless of when elections are held, the Pakistani government needs to address concerns about fraud, intimidation and transparency to ensure that elections are free, fair and transparent.

-It is in the interests of all of us to support Pakistan,s moderate majority in its struggle against a violent extremist minority.

-Over the longer term we urge all of Pakistan's friends to work with that country on its path to democracy by supporting good governance programs, education and projects in the Federally Administered Tribal Areas.

-(For London and USEU) We believe it especially important now that the international community mount a robust international election monitoring effort. We understand that security concerns are genuine but believe they can be accommodated. We urge the EU to follow through by sending a sizable observation/monitoring group.

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